

## WASHINGTON GOSSIP

TIMELY TATTLINGS FROM THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.

## PRESIDENT'S LITTLE JOKE

"Has Elevated the Bench"—Supreme Court Justices May Retire—Some Possible Changes in Senate Committees.



WASHINGTON.—President Roosevelt jocularly claims that he has done much to elevate the bench. He does not claim that this is due so much to his appointments as to the fact that at various times has resulted in taking men off the bench. The other day he met Judge Richards, whom he appointed some time ago as a federal circuit judge, and after receiving the latter's congratulations on his victory, he laughingly said:

"Well, judge, I have certainly been the means of elevating the bench in my career."

"Why, how is that?" asked the judge. "Well, you see I have been the means of taking several men off it, and then I have placed you upon it."

The men who left the bench on account of Mr. Roosevelt, were Judge Parker, Judge Van Wyck and Judge Herrick, all of New York, and all members of the New York judiciary. Judge Parker resigned to accept the democratic nomination for the presidency and run against Mr. Roosevelt. Judge Herrick resigned to become candidate for governor of New York against the republican candidate, Lieut. Gov. Higgins, and it is well known that he was selected because it appeared that Mr. Roosevelt's popularity would increase the vote of the republican candidate. Judge Van Wyck resigned to run against Mr. Roosevelt for governor of New York in 1898. So that the president in his political career caused three vacancies on the bench.

Mr. Roosevelt will have further opportunity probably of placing men on the bench before his next term is concluded, as there will doubtless be several changes in the federal judiciary from members of the district court up to the supreme bench.



## Justices to Retire.

HERE is considerable talk of retirements from the supreme bench at an early day. Chief Justice Fuller has reached the age when, under the law, he can retire from active service and enjoy full salary the rest of his life. The law permits a supreme justice to retire when he reaches the age of 70 or when he has served 20 years. Chief Justice Fuller will be 72 years of age next February. He was appointed chief justice in April, 1888, and although he has not served 20 years, he is still eligible for retirement on account of age. It is understood that the chief justice has not been in the most robust health and is thinking of giving up the arduous work of his position.

Associate Justice John Marshall Harlan is another member of the supreme bench who is eligible for retirement, both for age and for length of service. He was 71 years of age last June, and took his seat on the supreme bench in December, 1877. He will have completed 27 years as a supreme court justice on the 10th of December. He has been one of the strongest men physically of all the justices, but is now beginning to show his age. He has been an exceptionally hard-working member of the bench, and is still insistent on doing his full share of the duties of the court. He has led an active outdoor life, which accounts for his fine physical condition, and still at his advanced age is one of the most enthusiastic golf players at the national capital. There has been considerable talk of his retiring, but unless advancing years should tell on him more rapidly than they have, he may remain to complete 30 years of service.

The next one of the associate justices who can retire for age in the near future is Justice Brown, who will be 70 years of age on March 2, 1906. He has been on the supreme bench for 14 years. Then comes Justice Brewer, who will reach the age of 70 in June, 1907. He was commissioned an associate justice in December, 1889, and has 15 years to his credit. Associate Justice Peckham was appointed in 1895, and will reach the age of 70 in November, 1908. The other members of the court are comparatively young men. Justice McKenna is 61, Justice White 59, Justice Holmes 63 and Justice Day 55.

## Senate Committee Changes.

THE death of Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts, the election of Senator Fairbanks to the vice presidency and a few other changes in the senate that have resulted from the recent election will bring about a reorganization of that body. It is probable that the full rearrangement of committees will be postponed until

next congress, but the vacancy at the head of the judiciary committee caused by the death of Senator Hoar will be filled by the designation of Senator Orville H. Platt, of Connecticut. Mr. Platt has for many years been the ranking member next to the chairman on this committee, and his preeminent qualifications for the chairmanship are recognized by everyone. He is one of the solid, conservative and able statesmen whose record is absolutely clear and of the highest grade. He is not one of the orators of the senate, and does not trouble that body with many lengthy speeches. When he does make an address, it is full of meat and not a lawyer in the body leaves the chamber during its delivery.

Mr. Platt is known internationally as the author of the "Platt amendment" which has been incorporated in the organic law of the republic of Cuba and which virtually gives the United States a protectorate over the island. It permits the United States to prevent Cuba from swamping herself in debt, and prevents her forming an alliance with any other foreign power. The Connecticut senator has been chairman of the committee on Cuban relations, but as most of the important legislation concerning the relations between this country and Cuba has been accomplished, the position of chairman of the committee on the judiciary will be more commensurate with his ability and experience.

Senator Platt is a typical New Englander, tall, angular and cold on the exterior. He is a warm-hearted gentleman, however, to those who have penetrated his New England reserve. He is a fisherman and a hunter of note, and has a lodge in the Adirondacks to which he retires every year to indulge in his favorite recreation and rest from the grind of senatorial duties.

## Cortelyou in Demand.

NATIONAL Chairman Cortelyou is now paying the penalty of greatness. After several months of close application and arduous work he believed himself entitled to a vacation. He laid his plans for an immediate trip abroad, but found that there were demands upon him that compelled him to indefinitely postpone the rest he contemplated. He then arranged to take a hunting trip as a diversion and dream of a few weeks' quail and deer shooting in Virginia. The republican leaders, however, had other plans such as jubilee dinners and meetings at which he was expected to be present. As national chairman he could not decline these entertainments, and again his programme of rest was interfered with.

Mr. Cortelyou takes everything philosophically, and lives on the hope of some time getting away from political worries and really enjoying a period of rest. Such an experience will be rather odd for him, as since 1897, when he became assistant secretary to President McKinley, and a year later secretary, he has had very little opportunity of enjoying the recreation and rest which ordinary mortals account as necessary. He has been in the habit of devoting from 16 to 18 hours every day to his work. That application did not seem to have any effect upon him, for he would show up at the white house at nine o'clock in the morning as fresh and energetic as though he had retired at nine in the evening, instead of two hours after midnight. The long strain, however, is telling even on Mr. Cortelyou, and the tremendous work he performed during the late campaign has added five or ten years to his age.

If Chairman Cortelyou can get away he will either go to the West Indies or Europe, and remain there until the 4th of March. He will then enter President Roosevelt's cabinet as postmaster general. If he desires to indulge his appetite for work, he will not be disappointed in that position. Of all the heads of departments in Washington the postmaster general is the busiest and, if so inclined, can put in more hours of work than any of his colleagues.

## The Jefferson Bible.

HERE is a tremendous demand upon congressmen just now for copies of the "Jefferson Bible," as it is called, or to be more accurate "The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth." This is a work of Thomas Jefferson, and is now the property of the United States national museum in this city. At the last session of congress a resolution was adopted to print a facsimile of this interesting book for the use of congress. The photolithographic process was used, and 9,000 copies of the book, as prepared by Mr. Jefferson, were printed, 3,000 for the use of the senate and 6,000 for the use of the house.

The volume is an exact facsimile of the one found in Jefferson's library and is bound in full red leather. It contains two manuscript leaves in the handwriting of Jefferson, and the title page in that statesman's own handwriting which reads: "The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, extracted textually from the Gospel in Greek, Latin, French and English." The compilation consists of parallel columns of extracts from the Gospels in the original Greek, the Latin, the French, and the English. There are no comments, and the book is of use only to those versed in these languages. It is generally valued, however, as a remarkable curiosity, and the demand for it is something unprecedented in the history of government documents.

## FIRE IN MINNEAPOLIS.

Business Property to the Value of \$3,000,000 Destroyed.

For a Time the Best Part of the Retail District of the City Was Threatened With Entire Destruction.

Minneapolis, Minn., Dec. 14.—Fire which broke out in the photographic supply house of the O. H. Peck Co., on Fifth street, south, at 10:30 o'clock Tuesday night, spread to adjoining buildings and caused a loss estimated at \$3,000,000. The Peck building was entirely gutted, while the six-story furniture house of Boutell Bros., one of the largest establishments of its kind in the northwest, was ruined and a number of smaller buildings were also destroyed.

For a time the best part of the retail district of the city was threatened and the firemen seemed powerless to stay the onrush of the flames, which were driven by a high wind from the north.

By allowing the buildings already on fire to burn themselves out, and confining their efforts to adjacent buildings, however, the fire-fighters had the conflagration fairly under control at 2 o'clock Wednesday morning.

The fire was discovered in Peck's optical instrument store in the rear of Boutell Bros.' establishment. A small fire in itself, it got beyond the control of the firemen and attacked Boutell Bros.' house furnishing establishment. The big store, filled with draperies and rugs, hung from display racks, was easy prey for the flames and at 1 o'clock was hopelessly ruined. With the firemen still working on Boutell Bros.' building, the walls fell with a crash. Two firemen were seen in the glare to be buried beneath the avalanche of brick and mortar. One of the men caught in the fall of the walls was a member of the salvage corps. The other was a fireman from one of the engine companies.

The fire spread to the New England house furnishing establishment across the street from the Boutell Bros. store. Then it leaped to the Powers Mercantile Co.'s great department store.

The district in which the fire occurred is closely built, most of the buildings being substantial brick and stone structures and some of them, from an architectural standpoint, the handiwork of the city. The high wind carried burning brands and sparks in all directions and many incipient blazes were lit within a radius of four blocks. The Northwestern National bank building, the Phoenix office building, the National Bank of Commerce, the New York Life building and many other big office buildings were within the fire zone and for a time seemed to be in imminent danger. As soon as the extent of the fire was seen an appeal for assistance was made to the St. Paul department and two steamers and crews were dispatched by a special train.

The cold weather and the high wind deterred the firemen to a great extent in their efforts to subdue the flames, but fortunately the wind died down about 2 o'clock and further danger of the fire spreading seemed to have been averted.

## TROOPS IN THE PHILIPPINES.

Their General Health Is Reported To Be Excellent.

Washington, Dec. 14.—Brig. Gen. Randall, commanding the department of Luzon, Philippines, in his annual report to the war department, says that the general health of the troops is excellent, the disappearance of cholera having removed one of the greatest sources of anxiety. The improved health conditions are said to be due to the construction of new posts, the absence of hard field service, the drinking of distilled water, and enforced abstinence from native fruits and uncooked vegetables.

## VON PLEHVE'S ASSASSINS.

They Were Found Guilty and Sentenced to Imprisonment.

St. Petersburg, Dec. 14.—Sazonoff, who threw the bomb which killed Minister of the Interior Von Plehve, on July 28, and Sikorsky, his accomplice in the crime, were Tuesday found guilty by the court of appeals, sitting in the law courts building. The former was sentenced to imprisonment for life at hard labor and the latter to 20 years' imprisonment.

## Three Killed in An Explosion.

Niagara Falls, N. Y., Dec. 14.—Three men were killed and several fatally injured by an explosion at the Toronto and Niagara Falls Powder Co.'s tunnel shortly after noon Tuesday.

## Died at the Age of 104.

Springfield, Ill., Dec. 14.—Mrs. Bessie Bernstrin is dead at her home in this city, aged 104 years. She was born in Warsaw, Poland, and has lived in this country 27 years.

## The Next G. A. R. Encampment.

Denver, Col., Dec. 14.—The next annual encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic will be held in this city, beginning September 5, 1905. It will continue for five days. The railroads have granted a rate of one cent a mile.

## Decision Relative to Canned Goods.

Washington, Dec. 14.—The chemistry division of the department of agriculture Tuesday issued a circular directing that hereafter all canned goods containing coloring matter must be so marked.

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